episode 1

Requiem for the Guardians

2006 Summer

Himra Dairy Industry Presents

SWORD DANCERS 2

■ To begin.
Nice to meet you, everyone. Or perhaps, hello again, it's been a while.
This is the Archer-ko book, Sword Dancers 2.
This book doesn't have much relation to the first, but from now on I plan to tell a serial story, of a sort.

Ah. This time I didn't make an introduction page, so for anyone who doesn't know about Archer-ko, or hasn't read the first book, please have a look at my home page.

(If I've gotten bored, I may have made an explanatory page or something.)

Well then, on to the main topic. This story isn't really like that found in a typical series-based fanbook.
I'm borrowing the characters and world from Fate/Staynight to tell a story
"The Fifth Holy Grail War with Archerko".
(Regarding the doujin game in production that I'm eagerly awaiting (on my own, I have my hands full with my own books, sorry orz), it will be part of some sort of special compilation (though I haven't done anything about it yet). It's all in my head.

Thinking that I can introduce a lot of original characters... makes me happy.
(I can't forget that I haven't finished the remainder of the scenario at all. It's all my selfishness.)

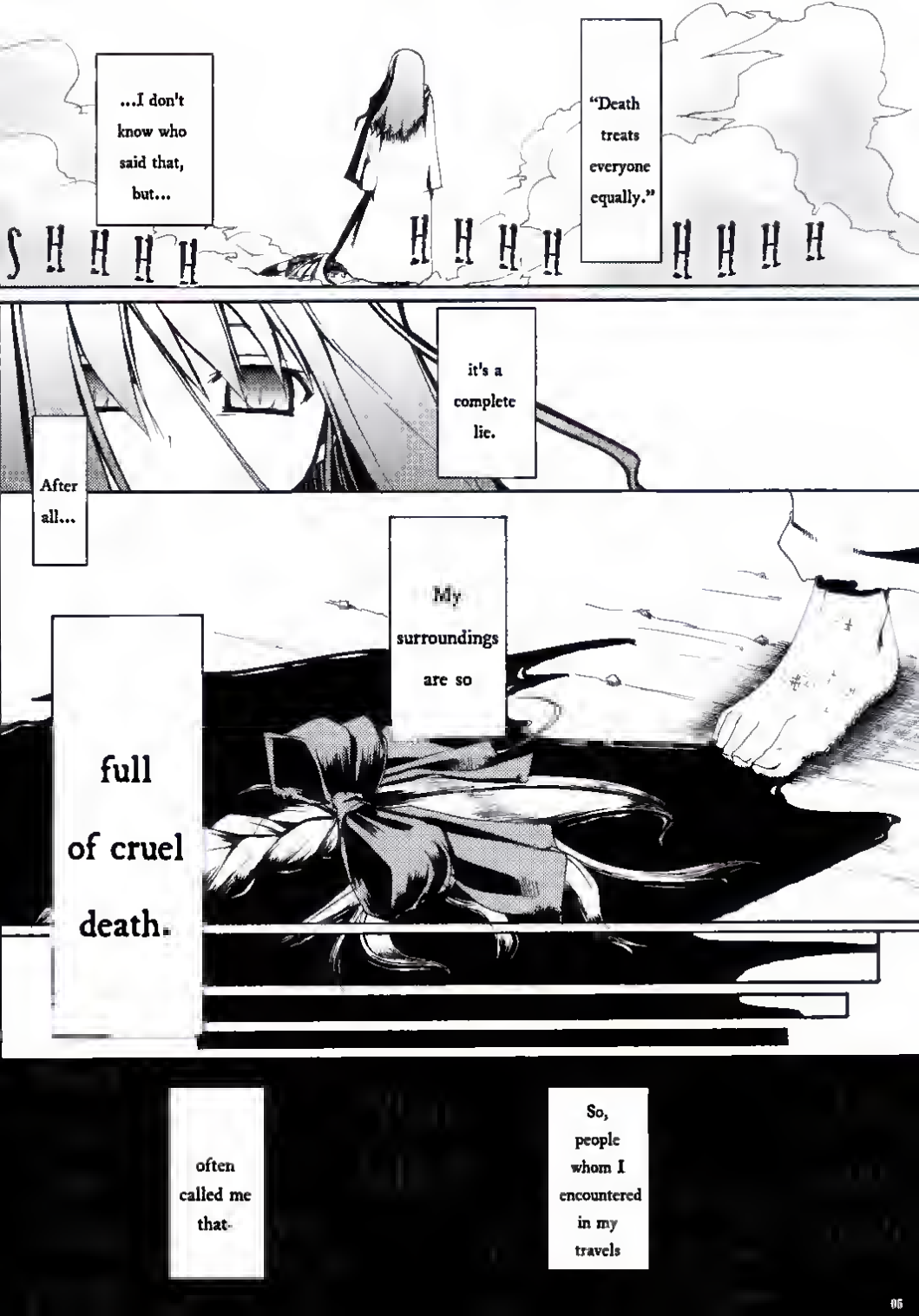
...Well, this circle's book is more or less the same as normal, but I'm half relying on your kindness to accept the rather conceited story I haven't shrunk from presenting to you, so forgive me.
I'm saying stuff like that, but I'll probably continue to follow this road from now on, so please don't give up on me.

Well then, well then. This story takes place after Archerko has been summoned in the Fifth Holy Grail war.
This episode is mostly told through the perspective of a single girl (who is she?).
Things have changed rather suddenly since the last book, so the story has become rather serious.
But don't worry. "She"'s still the same as always.

This volume is full of things you won't know, like the girl and the mysterious army (?!), so I challenge you to read right through the whole book from the beginning without lingering anywhere trying to work out the secrets.

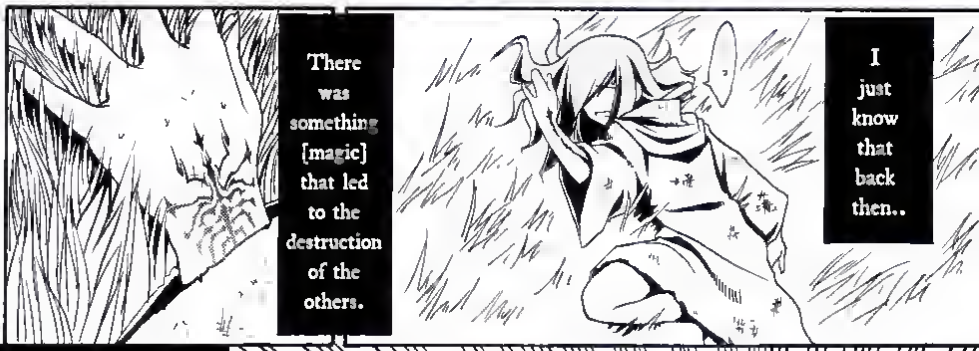
Those who know everything are working on the game, and concluding this story, so that's what's going on...(<-probably), but I'm extremely grateful to you all for sticking with me through all this.

Well then, I've just written a very long drawn-out thing, so
"Good luck with reading this, that I've enjoyed drawing so much" (that's it.)

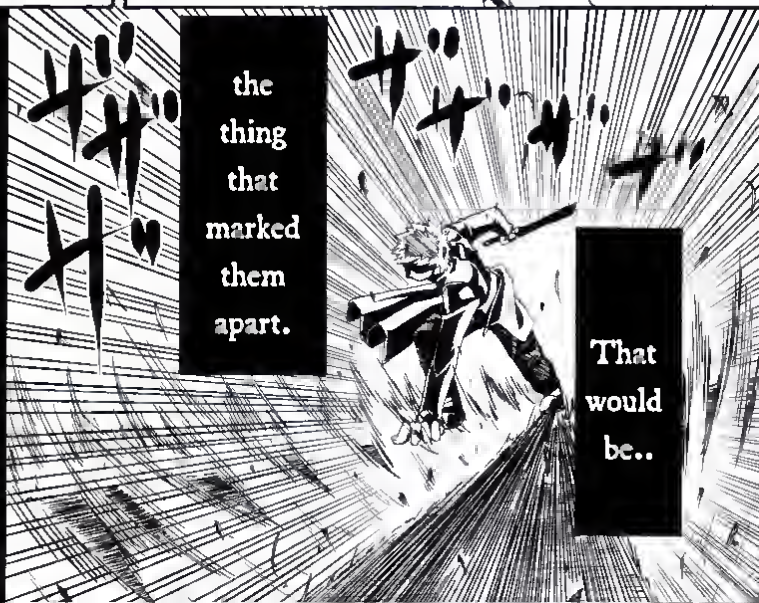

...I don't know who said that, but...
SHHH
"Death treats everyone equally."
HHHH
HHHH
it's a complete lie.
After all...
My surroundings are so
full of cruel death.
often called me that-
So, people whom I encountered in my travels

KA-
CLICK
DEMON CHILD!
..Yeah,
they're probably right.
TMP
So this must be divine punish-ment.
..Aaah
Sorry for continuing to live!
Sorry for being born!
I'm apolo-gizing,
I'm apolo-gizing, so

please
save
me!



"A sentence of destruction to his people"

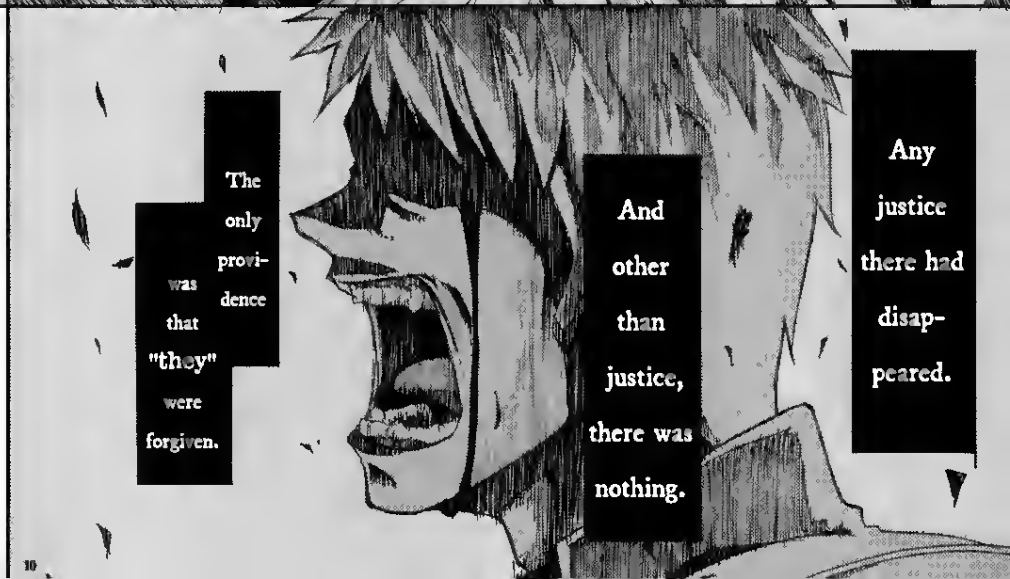


Now
In order to destroy those who would lead to the destruction of the human world
'He' was sent to this earth.
Protector of the Status-quo
Essen-tially, this was just
a sign of the end.
Counter Guardian

Ten thousand laments were all that was left.
From protecting a hundred million hopes,

Only one body remained.
From spinning a thousand lives,
After-wards, all that remained was the wreckage of that trade.
Believing the trade to be just, he carried it through to the end.

Here is an excep-tion.
But

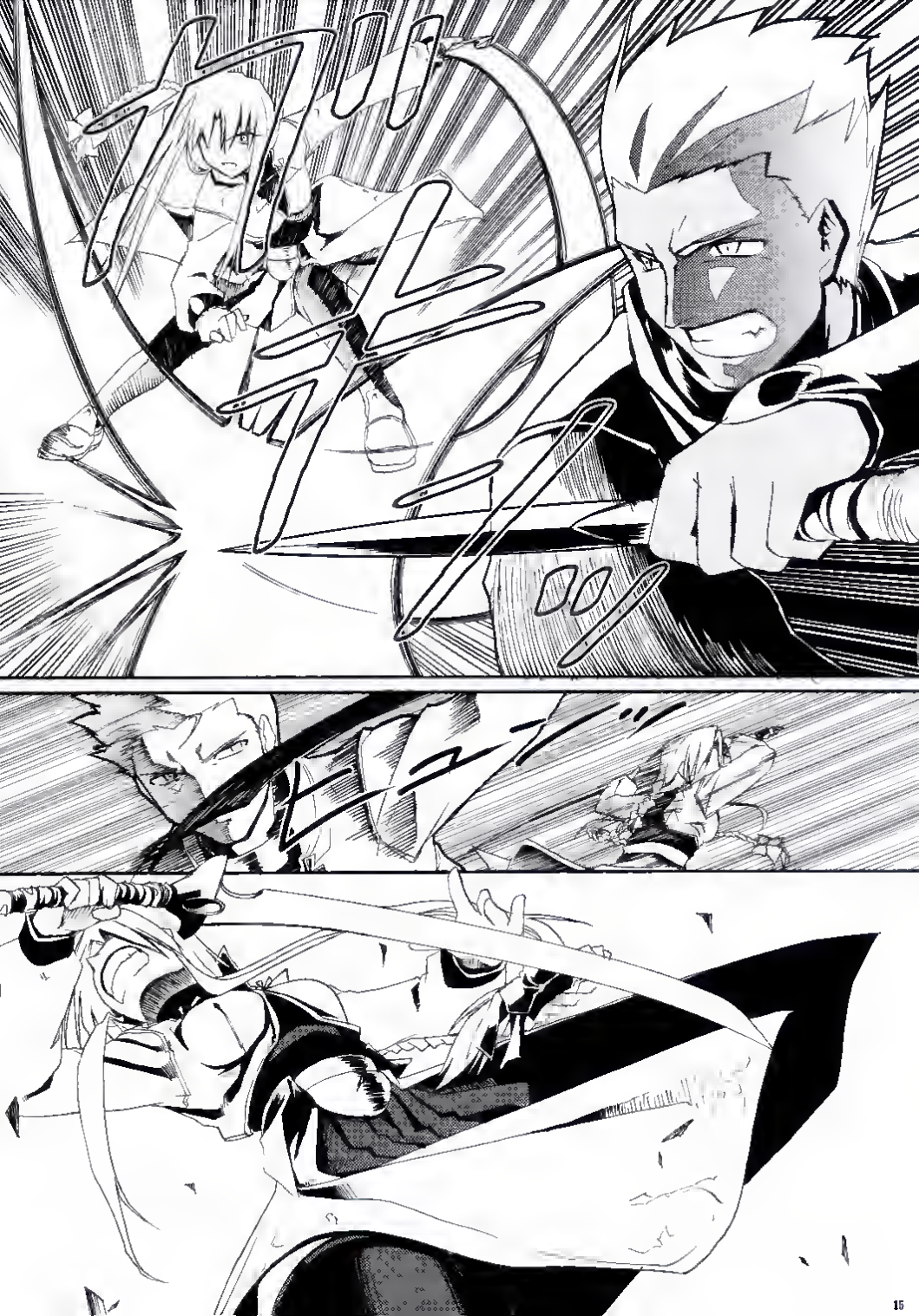

The only provi-dence was that "they" were forgiven.
And other than justice, there was nothing.
Any justice there had disap-peared.

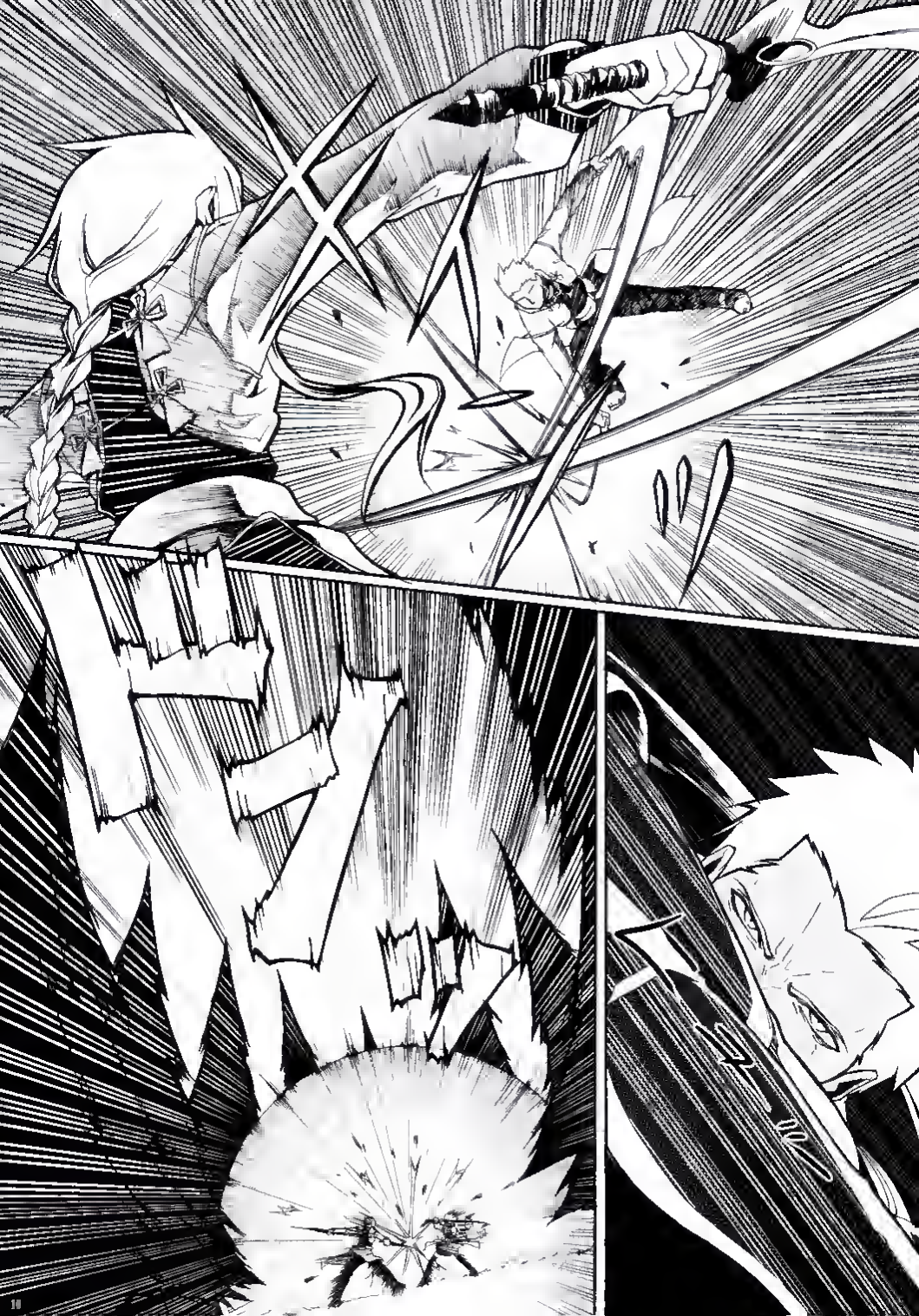
Counter Counter Guardian [protector of all things]
is what 'she' is often called, but 'her' true name..
'Her' appearance is linked only to 'his', and her true name...
Is known to but a few.

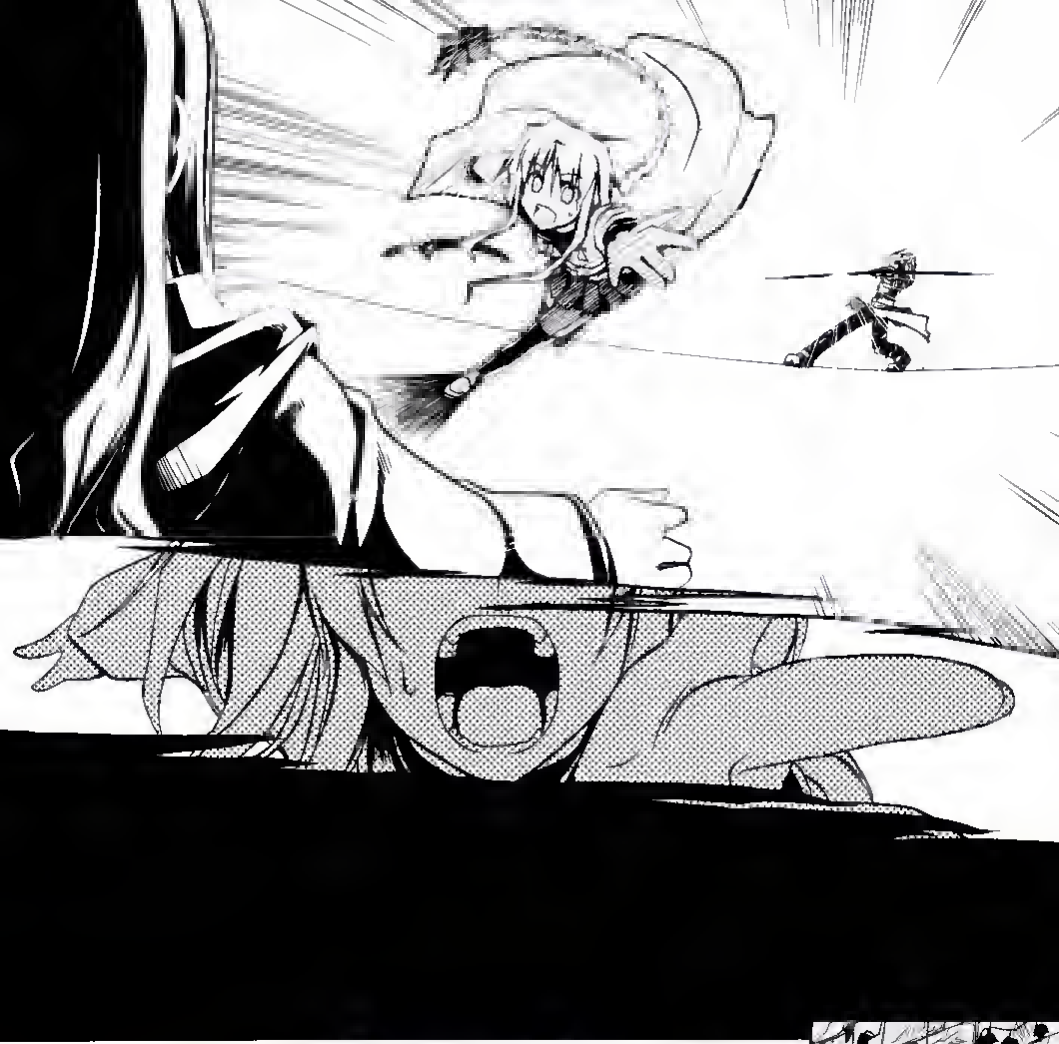
Framed by the moonlit sky

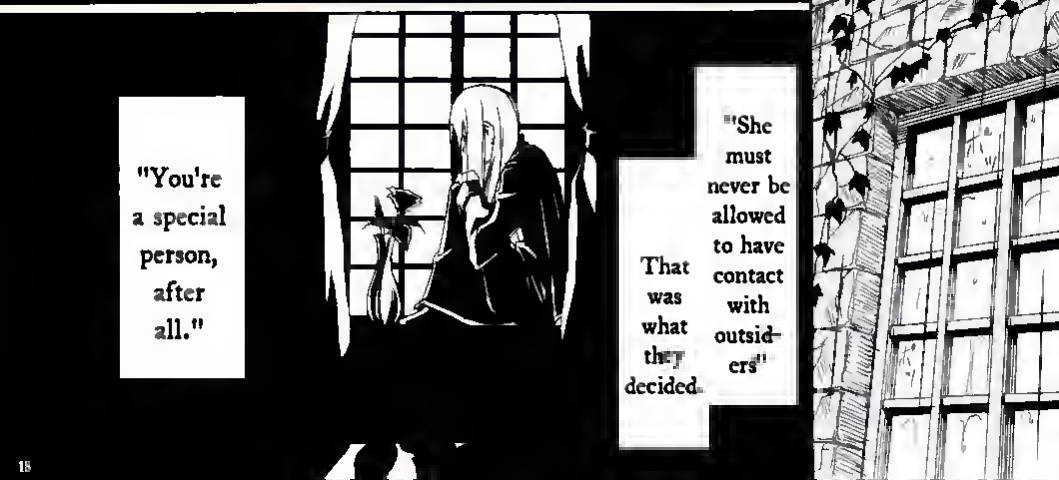
SWORD DANCERS 2

Requiem for the Guardians







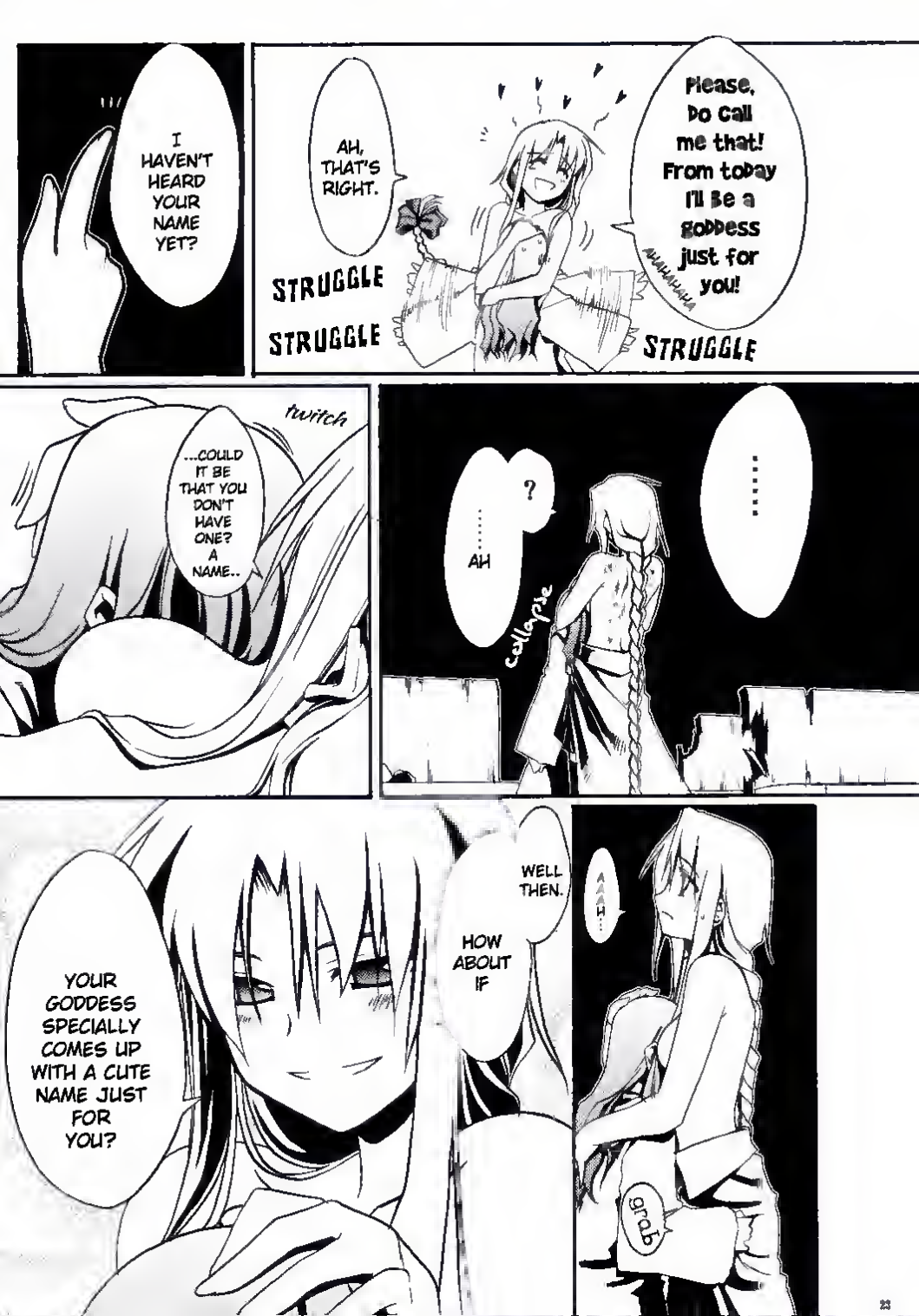

"You're a special person, after all."
That was what they decided.
"She must never be allowed to have contact with outsiders"

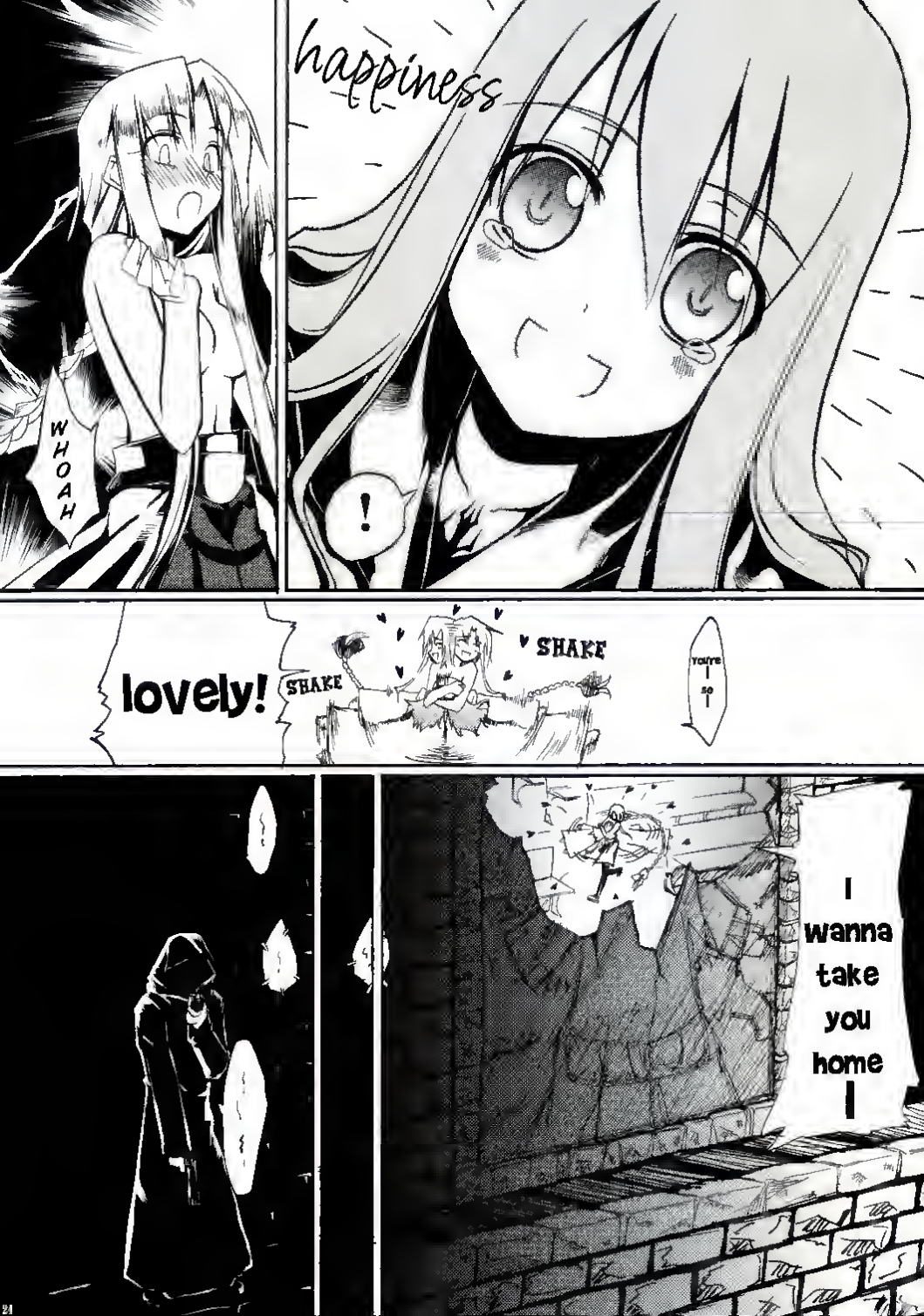
...I even believed it.
"So we can't allow anyone to taint you."
So I didn't think there was anything strange about everything.
Always seemed to be afraid of something.
And those assigned to play with me
For example, that the people who looked after me,
And that every day
those people
would disappear.

It's okay.
...
tap
I wasn't lonely. Really, I wasn't.
Be-cause
After they left I always
felt that they were still nearby.
rustle
rustle
rustle
rustle
...It's just that, even though right up to the end I wanted them
to hold my hand
and stroke my head
rustle
rustle
...OH
and hug me tightly.
they never did..
ARE YOU AWAKE?

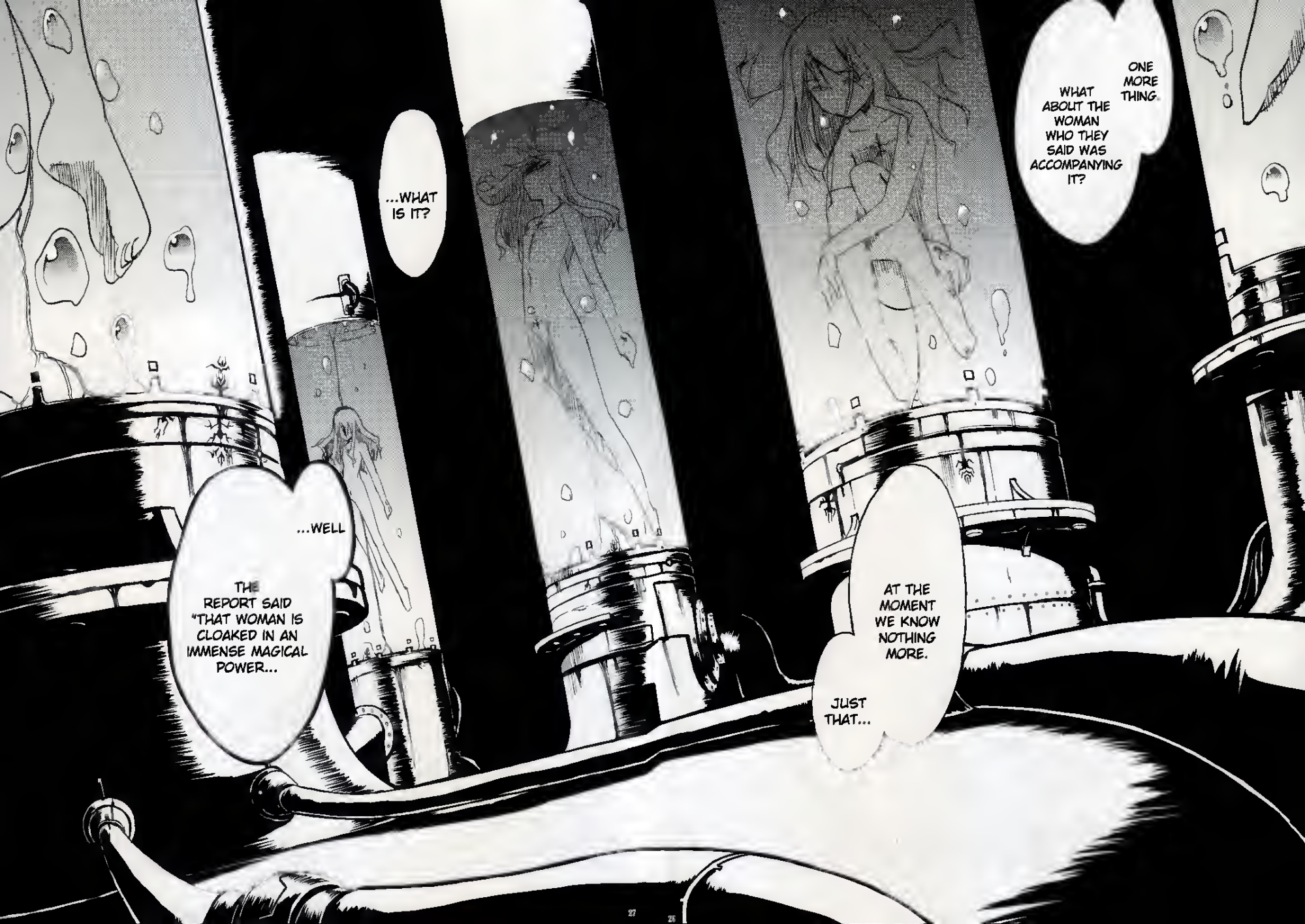
.....
THAT'S GREAT
IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE OKAY NOW.
THIS PLACE [RUINED CHURCH] WAS HERE FOR US AT THE PERFECT TIME.
FOR NOW, LET'S HIDE HERE.
?
WHAT IS IT?
mouth
mouth mouth

...ARE YOU REALLY
A GODDESS ...?
SO CUTE—!!
UWAA, WHAT ARE YOU?!
disappears
shaka shaka


I HAVEN'T HEARD YOUR NAME YET?
AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
STRUGGLE
STRUGGLE
Please, Do call me that! From today I'll Be a goddess just for you!
AHAHAHAHA
STRUGGLE
twitch
...COULD IT BE THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ONE? A NAME..
.....
?
.....AH
collapse
YOUR GODDESS SPECIALLY COMES UP WITH A CUTE NAME JUST FOR YOU?
WELL THEN.
HOW ABOUT IF
AH...
grab

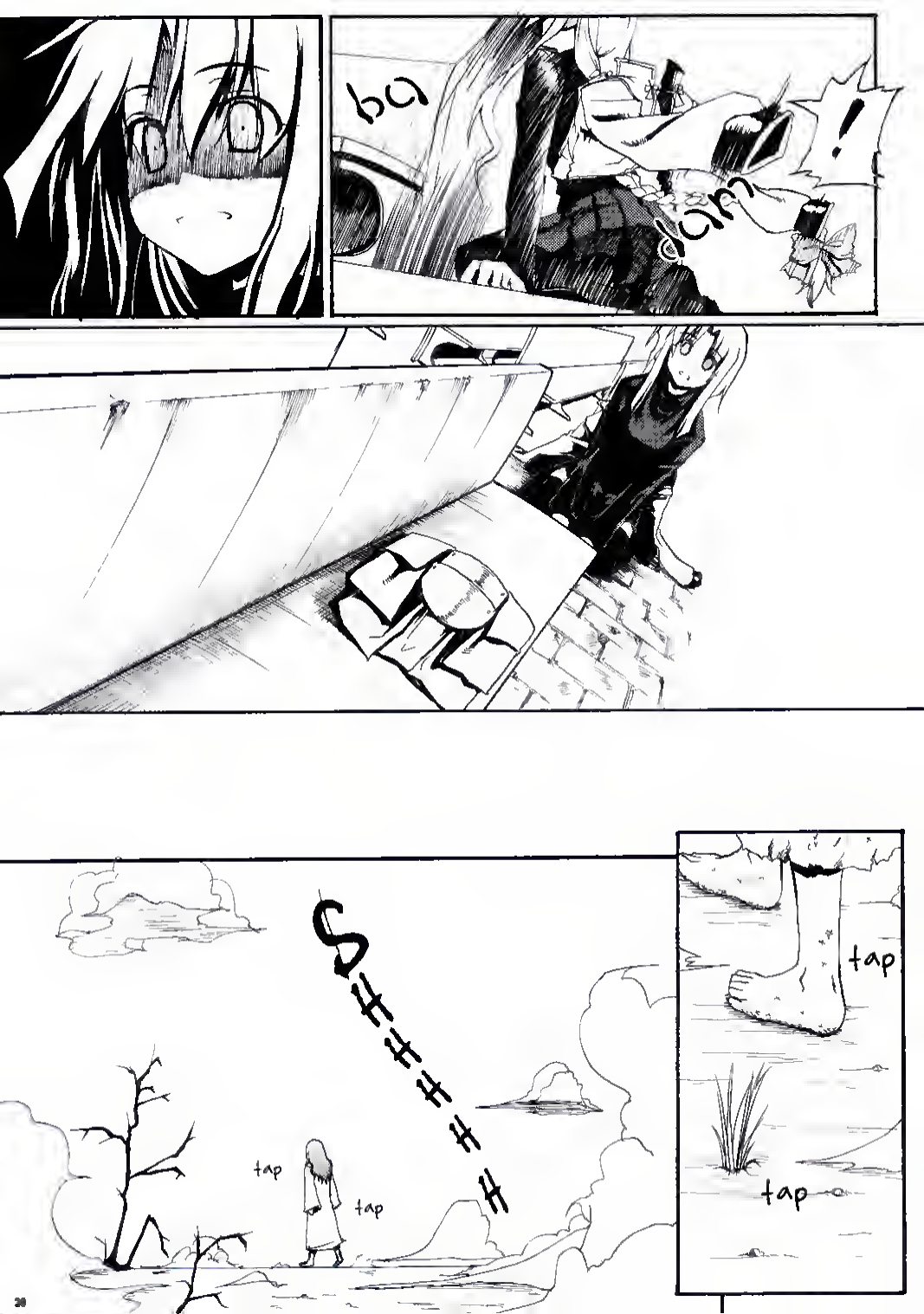

happiness
WHOAH
!
lovely!
SHAKE
SHAKE
You're so
I wanna take you home !

"WE HAVE CONFIRMED THE SURVIVAL OF THE SUBJECT.
...UNTIL THE MAIN FORCE ARRIVES WE WILL CONTINUE SURVEILLANCE." THAT WAS THE REPORT.
...HMM.
THAT IS GOOD NEWS.
SO IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF TIME UNTIL IT RETURNS TO ME..
tap
tap
INDEED.
HOWEVER, ALL COMMUNICATION FROM THE FIRST SEARCH PARTY HAS CEASED.
SUPPOSE THEIR PERHAPS THEY FELL FOUL OF THE "CLOCKTOWER"'S INTERVENTION
IRREL-EVANT.
WHATEVER SACRIFICE IS NECESSARY, I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO INTERFERE WITH EINZBERN'S PROGRESS.
I SEE..
ゴポッ
ゴポッ
ゴポッ


...WHAT IS IT?
...WELL
THE REPORT SAID "THAT WOMAN IS CLOAKED IN AN IMMENSE MAGICAL POWER...
JUST THAT...
AT THE MOMENT WE KNOW NOTHING MORE.
WHAT ABOUT THE WOMAN WHO THEY SAID WAS ACCOMPANYING IT?
ONE MORE THING.

KU KU KU KU
THAT'S GOOD.
HMMM
HER BEAUTY IS LIKE THAT OF A GODDESS."
AND
"MARK"... IS IT?
I DEFINITELY WANT TO MEET HER.
NO MATTER HOW LARGE A PROTECTIVE WALL SHE WEAVES WITH HER MAGIC WHEN FACED WITH IT, SHE IS SIMPLY BUYING TIME...
IF ITS "MARK" SPREADS, THAT BEAUTY WILL BE RUINED.
IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO SEE HOW IT WORKS ON HER IN TWO DAYS... BUT BY THEN IT WILL HAVE BECOME TRULY URGENT.
AND THE MAGIC SHE IS USING TO PROTECT HER BODY FROM IT.
HMM...
IT IS... YES...
YOU WERE UNAWARE OF IT?
Haa!
Haa!

....
IT IS A SIGN OF "SOUL VIOLATION."
Another nostalgic one... heehee, they're fighting again.
Ah, a dream.
...Hmm?
What's this?
...eh?
Really, just apologize- the one who'll get hit eight times later on is...
Aa-ah, his patience ran out.

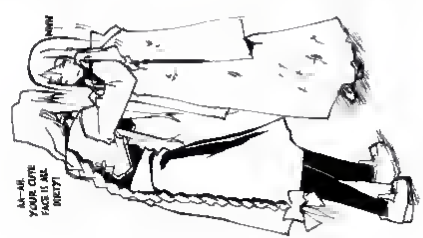

ba
!
tap
tap
tap
tap

F
W
OO
SH
Pluck
THIS IS THE ULTIMATE PROTECTIVE CHARM.
.....
IT WILL DEFINITELY PROTECT YOU!

WE WERE SENT TO RETRIEVE YOU.
NOW, RETURN WITH US
FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OUR THOUSAND YEAR OLD DREAM.

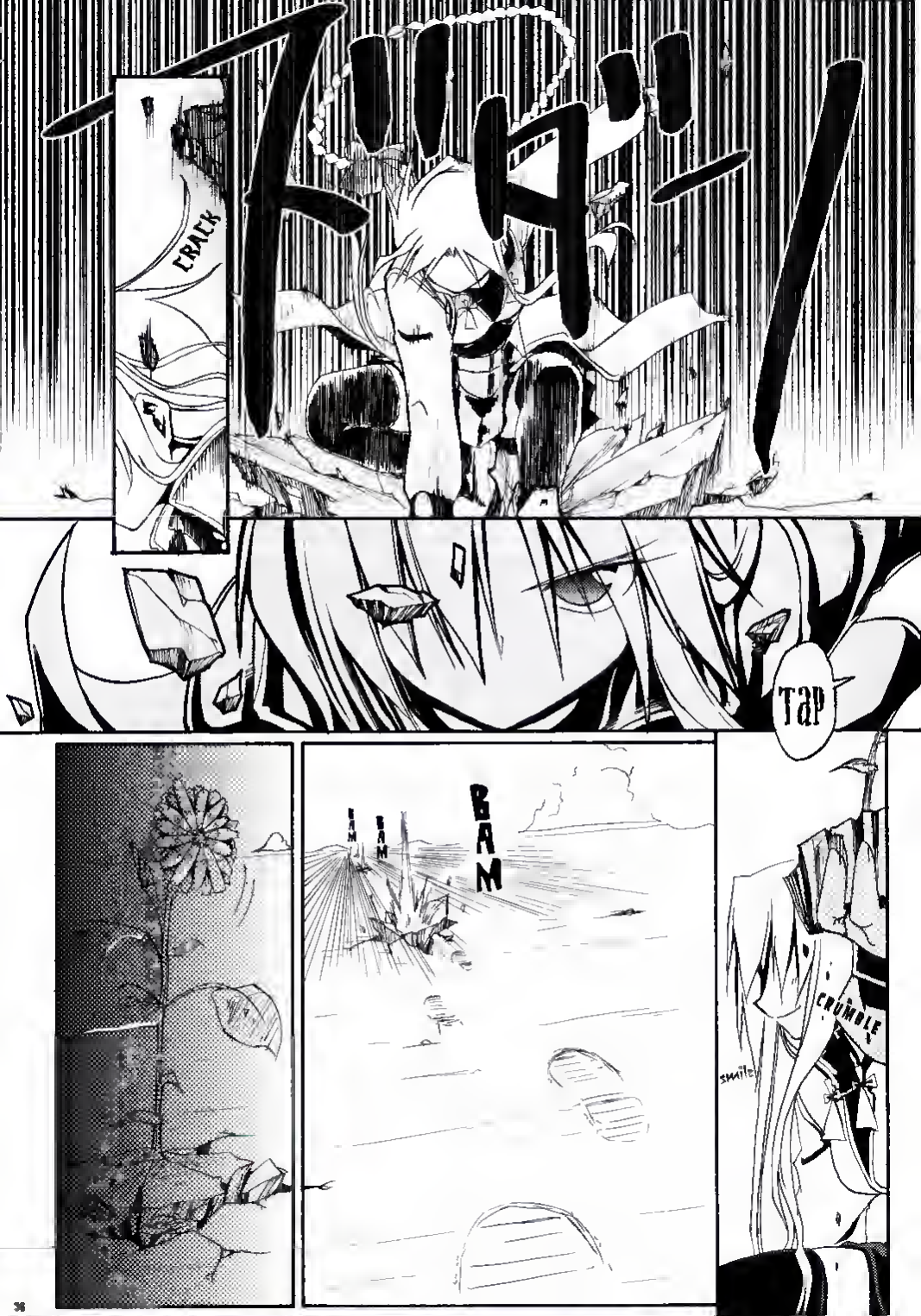
SWORD DANCERS 2

Requiem for the Guardians



ドン
ドン
ドン
ドン
"THERE'S NO OTHER WAY"!?
DON'T JUST DECIDE THAT ON YOUR OWN!

I WILL NEVER ACCEPT IT!
I KNOW THAT AL-READY..
HOWEVER... IF WE DON'T DO SOME-THING, WE'LL LOSE EVERY-THING, WON'T WE?
ANY SOLUTION THAT INVOLVES SACRIFICING SOMEONE..
IF IT WAS YOU
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

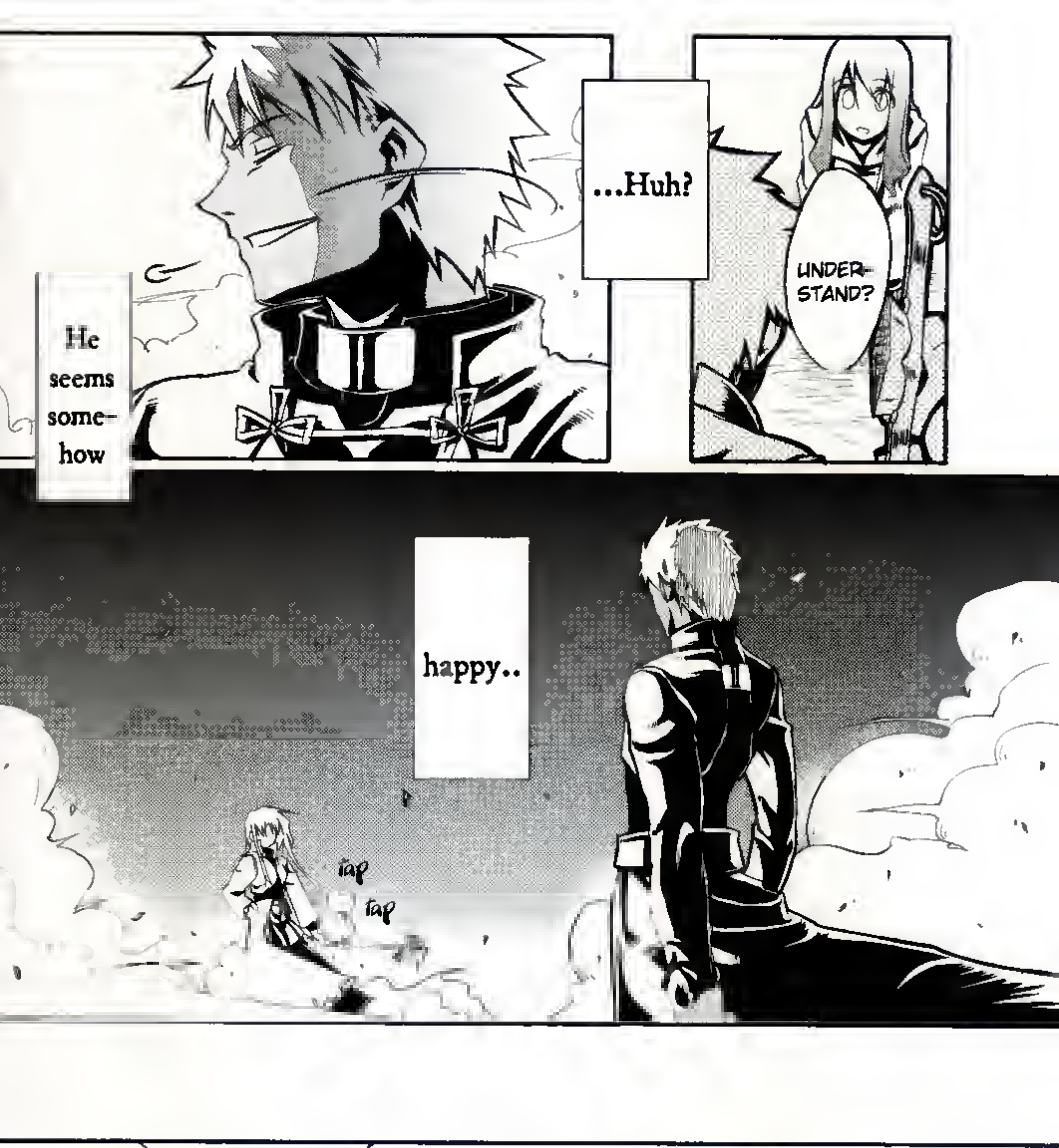

CRACK
Tap
BAM
BAM
BAM
CRUMBLE
smile

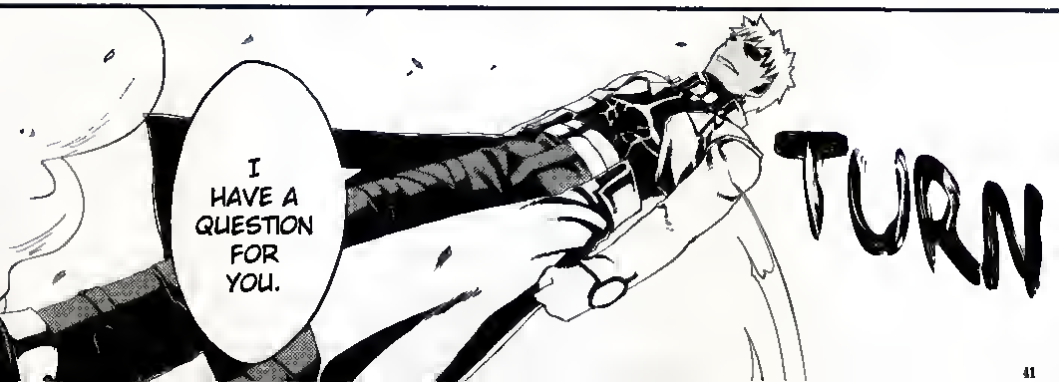
...AAA...
GASP
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?
GASP
DAMN.
DAMN.
BAM
click
BAM
click
BAM
click
BAM
click
MO-
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
MONST...

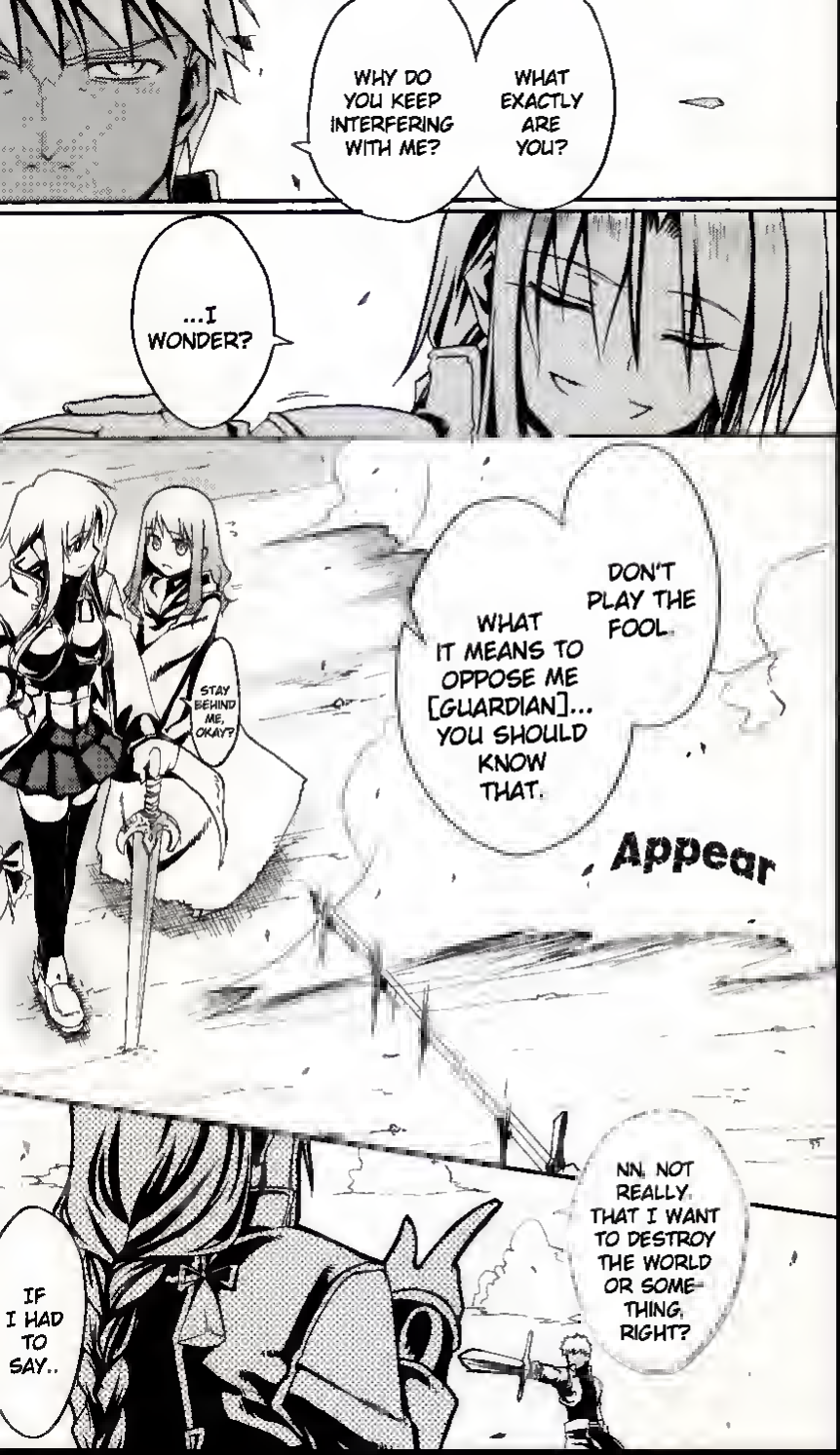
COLLAPSE
GA!
SHATTER
BAM
APPEAR
YOU UNDER-STAND BY NOW, RIGHT?
AS LONG AS YOU ARE HERE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO DIE
AH.
OF COURSE, YOU'RE NOT EVIL.

But everything that has happened
was because of you.
SCRAPE
clak
I WON'T ASK YOU TO AGREE WITH ME.
HATE ME AS MUCH AS YOU WANT.

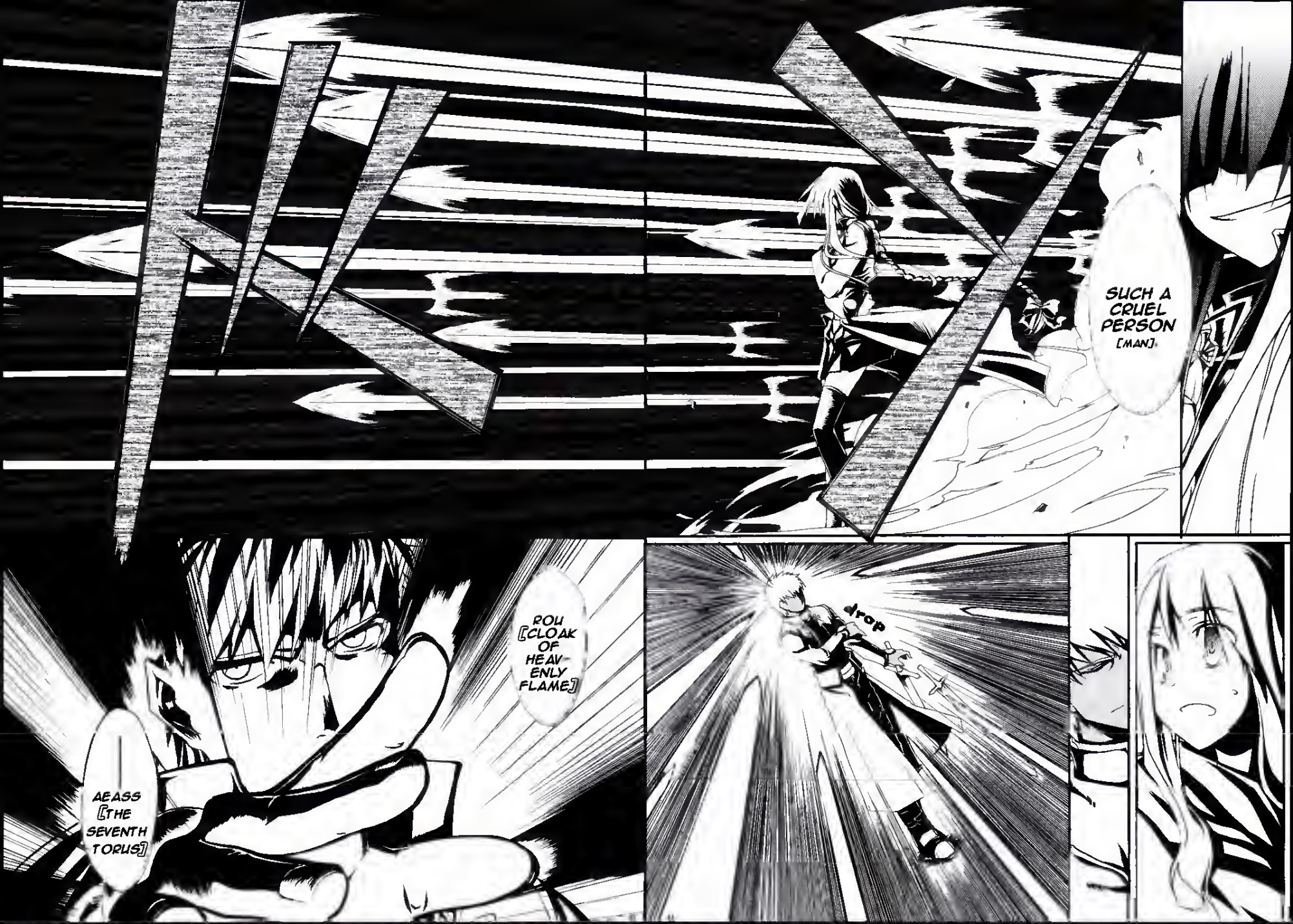
doki
doki
doki
.....
.....?
HOOOLD IT.
shatter
.....
WHAT YOU WERE ABOUT TO DO...
WAIT UNTIL AFTER YOU'VE DEFEATED THIS GODDESS HERE, OKAY?


He seems some-how
...Huh?
UNDER-STAND?
happy..
tap
tap


I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.
TURN


WHY DO YOU KEEP INTERFERING WITH ME?
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU?
...I WONDER?
STAY BEHIND ME, OKAY?
WHAT IT MEANS TO OPPOSE ME [GUARDIAN]... YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT.
DON'T PLAY THE FOOL.
Appear
NN, NOT REALLY. THAT I WANT TO DESTROY THE WORLD OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
IF I HAD TO SAY..

THIS IS JUST HARRASS MENT.
WHETHER MY TRUE OPPONENT IS YOU, OR ISN'T YOU...
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, DOES IT? NOTHING MUCH CHANGES, AFTER ALL.
TO PLACE SUCH A HEAVY BURDEN ON A FRAIL GIRL
JUST TO MAKE YOUR OWN LIFE EASIER...
IT'S THE SAME EITHER WAY.
REALLY...


SUCH A CRUEL PERSON [MAN].
ROU [CLOAK OF HEAV-ENLY FLAME]
AEASS [THE SEVENTH TORUS]
drop

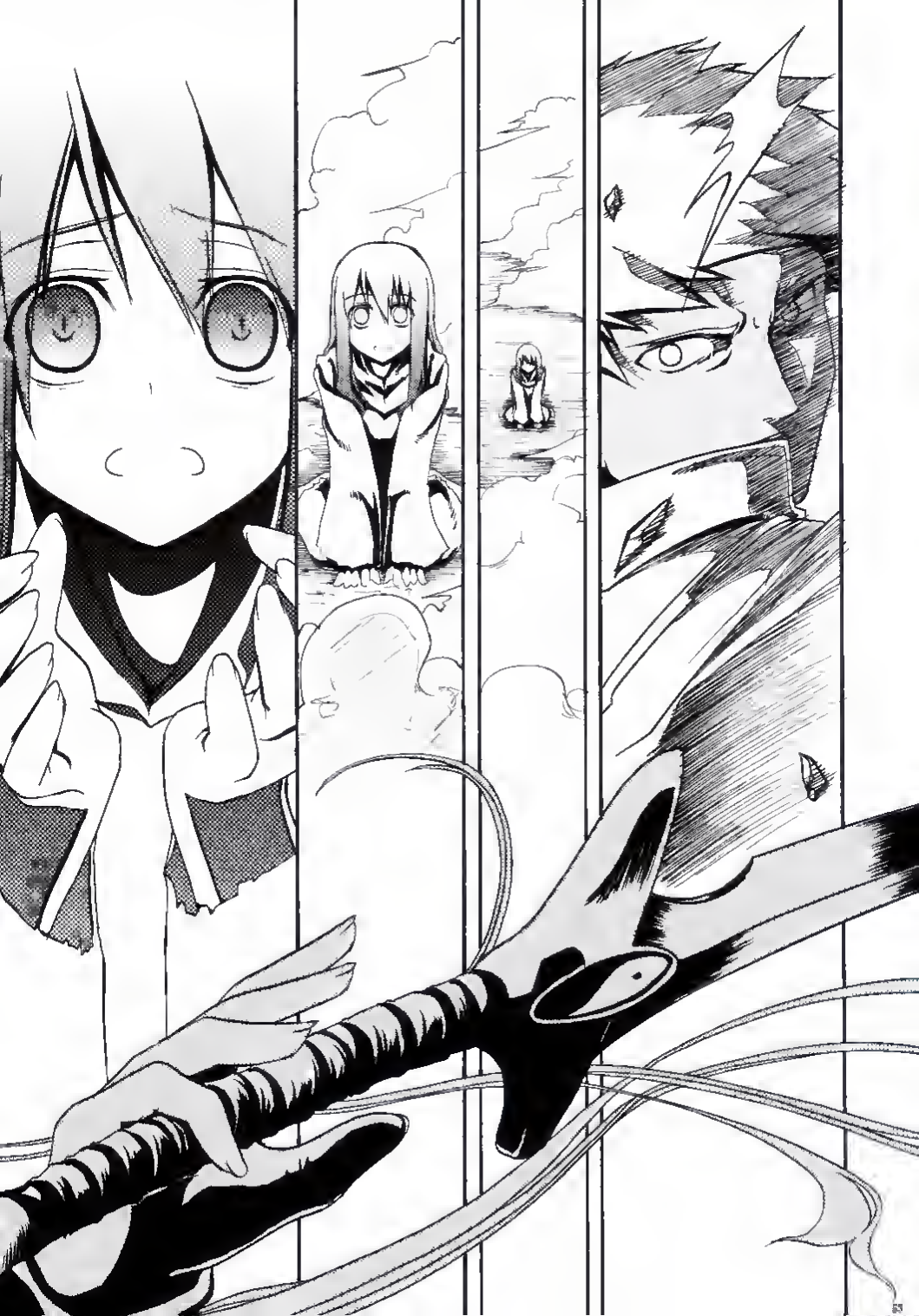
ガガガ
ガガガ
!

waver
Boo
bye
ILLUSION...
スッ
!?
PRIZE!
WAVER
WAVER
Ha!

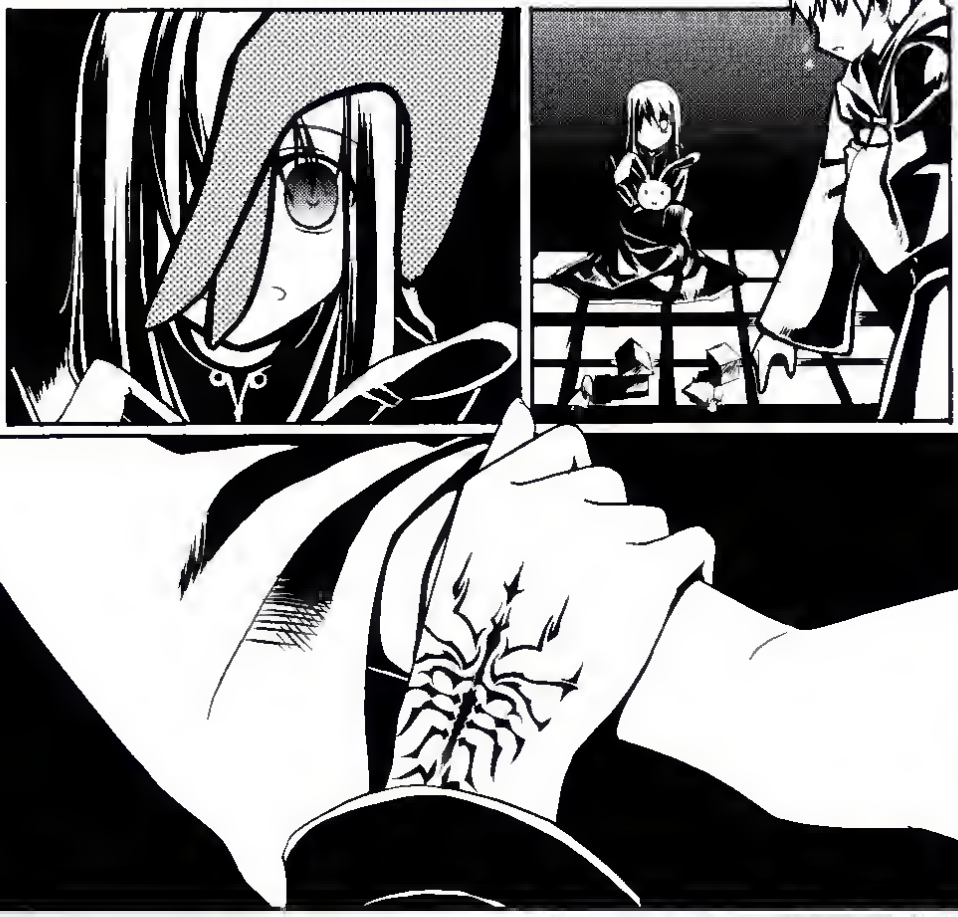
ズバッ
!

I'M DOING IT!
I'M FIGHTING!
THIS TIME
I WILL SURPASS YOU!
THIS TIME...
AGAINST
[MY...]
YOUR JUSTICE...

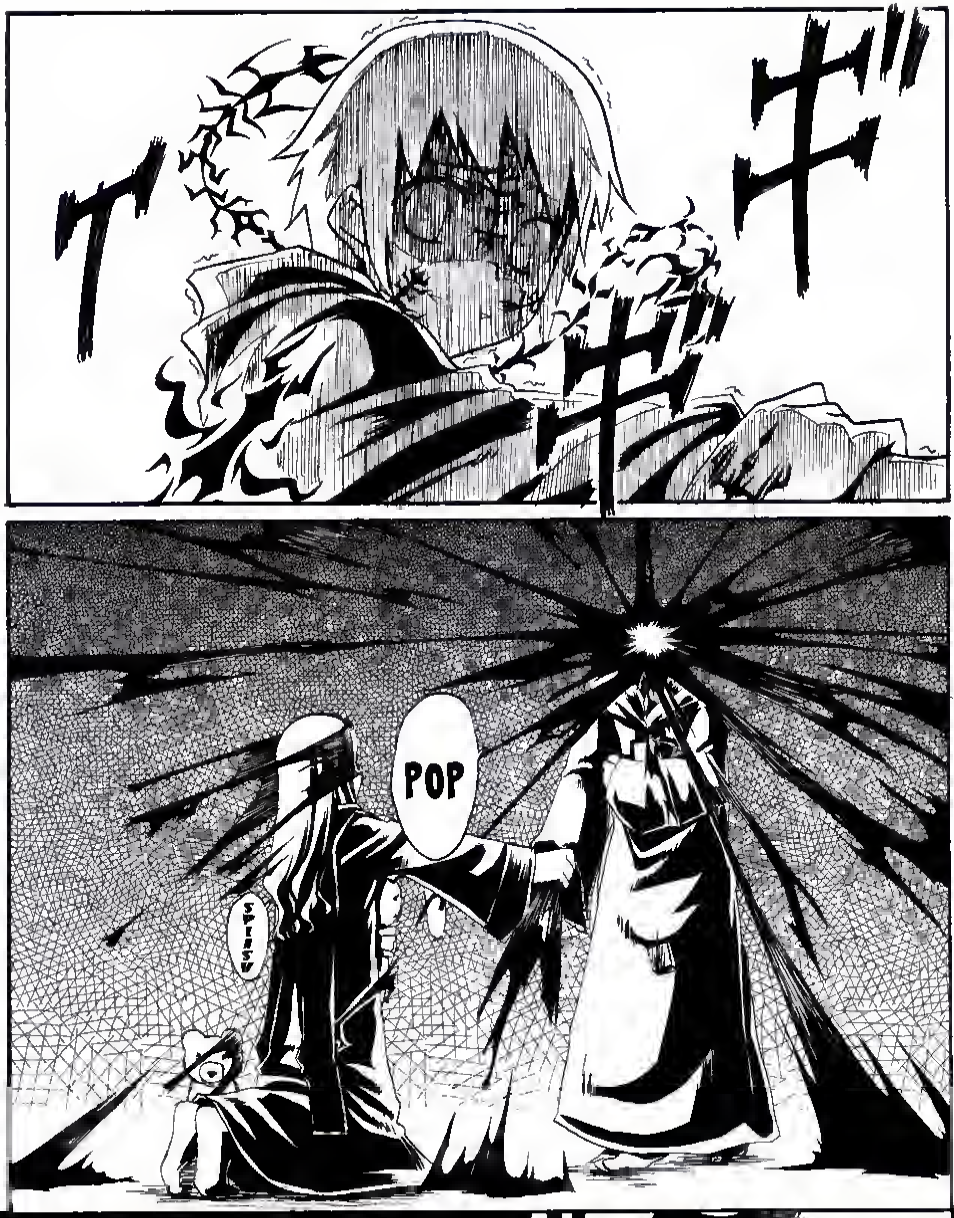
VICTORY...



Even now,
I haven't
forgotten.



The skin of the first person I touched was, of course, warm.



But the blood was hotter...

To be continued

■ Afterword

UNINTENTIONALLY, I'VE BEGUN TO WANT TO MISHEAR "ARE YOU COMING?" AS "IS IT COMING?".

AND I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT THEY'RE ASKING ME
"ARE YOU ACTUALLY WORKING ON IT PROPERLY?".

...I'M WORKING HARD, REALLY.

BY THE WAY.

ACTUALLY, AT THE BEGINNING I PLANNED TO CONCLUDE THIS STORY IN ONE BOOK.

JUST, TO FORCIBLY CONCLUDE THE STORY IN ONE (DOZENS) BOOK WOULD UNAVOIDABLY BE FAR TOO CONSTRICTING, AND WHEN I REALISED THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME THINGS I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE, I EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO CHALLENGE MYSELF AND PRODUCE A "SERIAL STORY".

HOWEVER, WHEN IT WAS TIME TO FOLLOW THAT RESOLUTION, AND I HAD MOST OF THE DRAFT OF THIS BOOK COMPLETED, I HAD BEEN ADDING EXTRA PANELS EVERY NOW AND THEN, BUT HAD TO GO BACK AND REMOVE THE ONES THAT INTERRUPTED THE OVERALL FLOW OF THE STORY, WHICH WAS A SHAME.

■ Technical? things

ANYWAY, TO NOT RELY ON TONES, AND COMPOSE THE SCENES IN BLACK AND WHITE...
THAT WAS THE GOAL THAT I WAS AIMING AT.

MY AIM WAS SOMETHING LIKE TRIGUN
(THE IMPACT OF A DUEL IN A WASTELAND IS HUGE, AND I USED IT AS A REFERENCE).

D.GREY (WHICH WAS THE REASON I WANTED TO TRY COMPOSING WITH BLACK AND WHITE) IS A BIT STRANGE, BUT...IT'S AN AWESOME TARGET TO AIM FOR, ISN'T IT?

I WILL DEVOTE MYSELF TO IT...(IT SEEMS LIKE I SAY THIS EVERY TIME...).

■ Characters

① THE GIRL -> I THOUGHT I'D MAKE HER NOT STAND OUT MUCH, SO SHE WOULD BLEND IN WITH THE FATE HEROINES.

② THE OLDER GUY IN RED -> I THOUGHT I'D TRY DRAWING HIM WITH REALLY EVIL EXPRESSIONS. WAS THAT BAD?

③ THE OLD MAN -> ...WELL, YEAH. THAT.

④ THE MASKED GUYS -> I WENT FOR THE STYLE OF AN EXECUTIONER IN THE MIDDLE AGES.
I DIDN'T SPEND MUCH TIME ON THE SMALL FRY HENCHMEN THOUGH.

WHILE I WAS DRAWING THIS BOOK, I KIND OF FELT THAT THIS BOOK WAS CHALLENGING THE LIMITS OF A FANBOOK,

AND I SERIOUSLY BEGAN TO FEEL UNEASY, AS IF THERE WAS SOME SORT OF IMPENDING CRISIS ON THE WAY.

WELL. WHETHER THIS BOOK WILL BE WELL RECEIVED IS SOMETHING ONLY GOD (THE READER) KNOWS.

I JUST DRAW.

...WELL, I'M SAYING THIS, BUT IT'S HUMAN NATURE TO WORRY.

"IT'S A SEQUEL SO I'LL READ IT" OR "NO WAY, DRAW SOMETHING ELSE",
WHATEVER OPINIONS OR THOUGHTS YOU HAVE, PLEASE SHARE.

NEXT, I HAVE TO SEND THIS TO PRINTING, FOR WHICH I HAVE TO THANK CAT'S TAIL-SAMA AND FRIEND I, AND I'M ALSO EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO FRIENDS K1 AND K2 FOR CONTINUING TO WORK THE SAME HOURS.

AND TO YOU, THE READER HOLDING MY BOOK, I OWE YOU THE LARGEST DEBT OF GRATITUDE AND APOLOGY(?).

WELL THEN, WHEN NEXT WE MEET.

13/08/2006 HIMURA KISEKI

■ Colophon

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